

WKNA General Meeting

Nov. 11, 2021 7 p.m.

At Keizer Civic Center, 930 Chemawa Road NE, Keizer, OR

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA Secretary

About 15 people in attendance, including speaker Matt Lawyer, Mayor Cathy Clark and City Councilor Laura Reid

Call to Order: Rhonda called the meeting order at 7:05 p.m. (Carol Doerfler unable to attend.) She recognized any veterans who might be in attendance. Introductions were made around the room.

Minutes from Oct. 14 – Art Mauer moved approval; Carolyn seconded; Minutes approved.

Budget Report, Rhonda Rich – She reported that \$156.35 has been spent on flyer boxes and stands, leaving \$393.65 remaining in the 2021-22 city-approved budget amount of \$550.

Guest speaker – Rhonda introduced Matt Lawyer, member of Keizer’s Parks Advisory Board, to report on the board’s final review of the Parks Master Plan revision, which has been underway for several months. The City has been working with MIG Consulting to handle the revision, which will guide Parks’ improvements for the next 10 years, once the plan is approved by City Council. Matt said this is the first time the Master Plan has the ability to have park improvement actions happen, rather than just be a wish list that takes a back seat to maintenance. That’s because Parks staff have done a great job catching up with deferred maintenance over the past three years, thanks to the parks fee that was instituted several years ago. They also were able to secure replacement play equipment for Claggett Creek and Meadows parks.

The Master Plan will tell staff the amenities that the community would like to see as priorities. Despite the pandemic, the City reached out for community input on park needs via an online survey and several outreach events such as Keizer Fest and a focus group with WKNA’s Board.

As a result of that input, needed amenities have been identified for parks across the city. At Keizer Rapids, some restructuring is in store. An Adventure Course is newly identified. It will serve McNary ROTC cadets for obstacle course training and competitions but also will be open to the public. Recently, the addition of two multi-use sport fields on the north end of the park came about as the result of a proposal from Marion County Commissioner Colm Willis. He submitted a proposal for the multi-use fields (soccer, Lacrosse, football, futsal, etc.), in order to assist local soccer clubs that are in need of playing space. A new parking area also is identified on the plan to accommodate spectators for sports events.

Also of interest in West Keizer, the Parks Board voted not to take down the Palma Ciega Park sign and turn the park over to neighbors but to “do the best we can” for this small neighborhood park adjacent to the Willamette River. West Keizer Neighborhood Association backed keeping Palma Ciega as a usable natural area park, especially because of the importance given to river access and natural areas in citizen comments about overall park desires. There are challenges to work out, including the fact that the federal dike to protect Keizer from flooding is part of the park. Also, access to the river is via a steep bank, so any work to create better access has to be acceptable to federal officials and can’t compromise the flood-control aspects in the area. The Parks Board’s recommendation to amend the Master Plan as it applies to Palma Ciega goes to City Council, which will have final say.

Another issue that has arisen is the prospect of an inclusive play structure at Wallace House to accommodate children with special needs. There is an Integrated Supports for Living Inc. group home for children near Wallace House but the play structure is inaccessible to the children at the group home. Victoria Miles, who was at the WKNA meeting, spoke to the Parks Board recently about

creating sensory opportunities at Wallace House for children who have challenges with traditional play equipment models. Matt said this idea will be put before the Council Nov. 29 at their work session on the Master Plan.

For now, final plan approval looks like it will come in December or January. It could be remanded back to Parks Board for more work, but that isn't expected. People were directed to the City website to see the entire Master Plan and make comments.

In Question and Answer, residents of Tate Avenue expressed concerns about more cars inundating the neighborhood to attend soccer or other games on the new fields. People attending the summer concerts at the KRP amphitheater clog Tate and nearby Riverwood Court so there's no parking for guests of residents. Matt and Mayor Clark (also in attendance) pointed out that there is a large new parking area, as well as grass field parking available for special situations.

Another question addressed the buffer area that the plan identifies on the park's east edge. It will consist of an extension of the arboretum up to Chemawa Road. Matt said neighbors would be made aware before any project development starts.

There is no projection of a start date for any amenity identified in the Master Plan and funding is not settled at all. The Adventure Course may be the first amenity pursued because it's being driven by a request from McNary ROTC, which has plans to seek funding, etc.

Matt then identified a project idea for which he sought help from WKNA – another phase of native shrubs and plants in the lower area of Wallace House, as well as placement of some logs to help deter bank erosion. Possible date for a work party is 10 to noon Sunday, Dec. 12.

He also brought to everyone's attention zoning changes that the Keizer Planning Commission will be considering. (He is a Planning Commission member as well. HB2001 set new mandates for cities of 10,000 population or more to allow multi-family structures in single family zoning (up to fourplexes). By June, Keizer has to update its Comprehensive Plan to reflect this change. It's a major development that will affect the entire city. The commission meets the second Wednesday of every month and the matter will be on the Dec. 1 agenda. If the city doesn't come up with a revision by June, it will have to accept the state's model.

City Council Liaison report – Councilor Laura Reid said the biggest issue for Council right now is the Keizer Little League contract, which is on the Nov. 15 agenda. The Management Contract for the Keizer Rapids Amphitheater operation will be taken up at the Dec. 6 meeting.

Mayor Clark said Council will accept the resignation of Council Ross Day at the Nov. 15 meeting. They are accepting letters of interest to fill that vacancy and will be doing interviews mid-December.

Council will be reviewing applications received for the City Manager post at a Nov. 29 work session. The position hasn't closed yet. Semi-finalists and then finalists will be chosen and it's possible a "meet the candidates" open house may be scheduled. They hope to make a selection by February.

She reviewed the busy holiday event calendar and urged people to visit the Chamber of Commerce website for more information about the tree lighting Dec. 7, the Lights Parade Dec. 11, fun runs, etc. Volunteers also are needed to wrap presents and deliver Christmas boxes as part of the Community Basket Program. She said \$30,000 was raised this year to support this holiday cheer effort.

She noted that as of January, governments will be required to offer “hybrid” meetings – in-person presenters and/or virtual, as well as in-person attendees and/or virtual. Keizer Fire meetings are via Zoom, as are Cherriots Board sessions, so any citizen can join in on those.

The City also is accepting letters of interest for spots on the Community Diversity Engagement Committee. Mayor Clark said names of those interested will be distributed to councilors for consideration. There are 9 slots – 6 at-large members, 2 city councilors and 1 youth member. Mayor Clark will appoint the youth representative and name the councilor members. Each councilor will have a selection, which can be chosen from among those submitting letters of interest, or if they have someone of their own in mind. Appointments are to be made by Dec. 6.

REPORTS

WKNA Newsletter, Carolyn/Robb – Carolyn said she, Carol Phipps and Robb Witters will be meeting next week to plan the next edition of the newsletter, which should come out in early December. WKNA is planning to issue a newsletter every quarter to help keep neighbors informed. It is distributed to the WKNA email list and some hard copies are placed in brochure boxes located at the West Keizer parks and in front of Board member homes.

Traffic issues, Rhonda/Carolyn – WKNA members have been attending Traffic Safety Bikeways meetings to discuss the problem of speeding throughout Keizer neighborhoods, people running red lights and excessive noise from some cars and motorcycles. WKNA will be kicking off a neighborhood discussion at its January meeting and Rhonda urged people to attend and bring their thoughts and concerns forward. Chief Teague will be at the February meeting to answer questions and talk about possible solutions.

ROUND TABLE

Victoria Miles, with Integrated Supports for Living Inc., again discussed the need for inclusive play equipment at city parks, especially Wallace House. She said IS will be holding a fundraiser at Riverfront Park in Salem on June 4. Funds raised will go toward putting accessible equipment at Wallace House. The goal is \$250,000. IS is collaborating with Shangri-La on the fundraiser. Mayor Clark said an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) inventory has been done by the city but it needs to be put out for review in case anything was missed.

Judi Liechty, who volunteers with Keizer Community Food Bank, said need is spiking as the holidays near. The food bank averaged 60 families this summer and that has grown to 100 families now. They expect the number to continue to grow. Volunteers are needed and they are looking for a van to pick up food donations. Anyone interested in volunteering can just show up. Food box distribution takes place Monday evenings and Thursday mornings. Volunteers are also at the food bank at Faith Lutheran Church, located on River Road and Cummings, every Wednesday noon to accept donations. Check out Keizer Community Food Bank’s Facebook page for the phone number and other information.

WKNA has sponsored food donation barrels at Bi Mart and Copper Creek. Other donations barrels benefitting Keizer food bank are at Uptown Music, Tony’s Comics and The Rec.

Next meetings: WKNA Board, 6 p.m. Dec. 2

WKNA General, 7 p.m. Jan. 13 at City Hall -- NO DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.